## Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1 - 14. (Cancelled).

15.   (Currently Amended) ~~A composition comprising~~ [[p]]$\underline{P}$artly hydrophobic silica particles said partly hydrophobic silica particles having a contact angle θ in air for water of less than 180°, a degree of coverage τ of the surface of the silica with silylating agent residues, based on the total silica particle surface area, of $1\% < \tau < 50\%$, a density of surface silanol groups SiOH ranging between a minimum of 0.9 and a maximum of 1.7 SiOH/nm² particle surface area, and having a carbon content of more than 0% and up to 2.0% by weight, and a methanol number of less than 30, said partly hydrophobic silica prepared by a process comprising silylating silica particles with

I)   an organosilane of the formula

$$R^1_n SiX_{4-n}$$
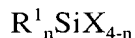
where n is 1, 2 or 3
or mixtures of these organosilanes,

R^1 being a monovalent, optionally halogenated hydrocarbon radical having 1 to 24 carbon
        atoms, being identical or different at each occurrence, and being saturated, aromatic,
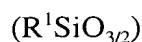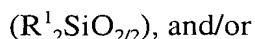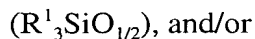   monounsaturated, or polyunsaturated,

X   each independently being halogen, a nitrogen radical, OR^2, $OCOR^2$, or
$O(CH_2)_x OR^2$,

R^2 being hydrogen or a monovalent hydrocarbon radical having 1 to 12 carbon atoms, and

x   being 1, 2 or 3;

or

II)   an organosiloxane composed of units of the formula

$$(R^1_3SiO_{1/2}), \text{ and/or}$$

$$(R^1_2SiO_{2/2}), \text{ and/or}$$

$$(R^1SiO_{3/2})$$

where R^1 is as defined above, or mixtures thereof,

the number of these units in one organosiloxane being at least 2; and I and II being used alone or in any desired mixtures in a total amount of from 0.015 mmol/g to 0.15 mmol/g per 100 m²/g of silica BET surface area measured by the BET method in accordance with DIN 66131 and 66132.

16.   (Currently Amended) The ~~composition~~ particles of claim 15, wherein said silylating is performed with an organosiloxane composed of units of the formula (II)
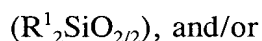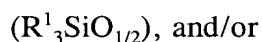
$$(R^1_3SiO_{1/2}), \text{ and/or}$$

$$(R^1_2SiO_{2/2}), \text{ and/or}$$

$$(R^1SiO_{3/2})$$

where R^1 is as defined above, or mixtures thereof,

the number of these units in one organosiloxane being at least 2; II being used in a total amount of from 0.015 mmol/g to 0.15 mmol/g per 100 m²/g of silica BET surface area measured by the BET method in accordance with DIN 66131 and 66132.

17.   (Currently Amended) The ~~composition~~ particles of claim [[7]] 15, wherein said silylating is performed with an organosilane of the formula

$$R_3SiX_{y-n}$$
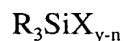
where n is 1, 2, or 3, or a mixture of these organosilanes, where R^3 is a monovalent saturated hydrocarbon radical having 1 to 24 carbon atoms or a monovalent or monovalent aromatic hydrocarbon radical having 6 to 24 carbon atoms, each R^3 being the same or different,

X   each independently being halogen, a nitrogen radical, OR^2, $OCOR^2$, or

         $O(CH_2)_xOR^2$,

R^2 being hydrogen or a monovalent hydrocarbon radical having 1 to 12 carbon atoms, and

x   being 1, 2 or 3.

18.   (Currently Amended) The ~~composition~~ particles of claim 17, wherein said step of silylating is additionally performed with an organosiloxane of the formula (II).

19.   (Currently Amended) The ~~composition~~ particles of claim 17, wherein each R^3 individually is selected from the group consisting of methyl, ethyl, propyl, butyl, pentyl, hexyl, octyl, decyl, dodecyl, hexadecyl, octadecyl, phenyl, biphenyl, napthyl, benzyl, ethylpenyl, tolyl, and xylyl radicals.

20. - 29. (Cancelled).

30.   (Currently Amended) The ~~composition~~ particles of claim 15, wherein said partly hydrophobic silica has a methanol number less than 20.

31.   (Currently Amended) The ~~composition~~ particles of claim 15, wherein said partly hydrophobic silica has a carbon content of 0.1 to 0.5 weight percent per each 100 m^2/g of surface area.